

Message Text

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45

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 ACDA-05 /095 W

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P R 311410Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4902

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

RUSHDIUXUSMISSION NATO BRUSSELS 19

USMISSION USUN NY

USCINCEUR

CINCUSNAVEFR

FOSIF ROTA

COMSIXTHFLT

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 2701

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PBOR MMOL MOPS MR MO SS SP

SUBJECT: SAHARA WATCH: CALM RETURNS TO MAURITANIA

REF: NOUAKCHOTT 4890

1. SECURITY SITUATION IN AND AROUND NOUAKCHOTT HAS EASED
CONSIDERABLY IN PAST SEVERAL DAYS. BEEFED-UP SECURITY ELEMENTS
SO VISIBLY ON DISPLAY DURING LA GUERA AND TICHLA CAMPAIGNS
HAVE ALL BUT DISAPPEARED. ALTHOUGH AIRPORT SECURITY CONTINUES
BE TIGHTLY CONTROLLED, GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS AND DOWNTOWN
NOUAKCHOTT COMMERCIAL DISTRICT ARE CURRENTLY BEING MONITORED
BY ROUTINE SECURITY CONTINGENTS. EXTRA SOLDIERS HAVE RETURNED
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TO BARRACKS; BAYONETS HAVE BEEN SHEATHED. IF

NIGHTLY CURFEW IS STILL IN EFFECT, IT IS NO LONGER BEING ENFORCED.

2. LOCAL FRENCH AND SPANISH DIPLOMATS, WHO MAINTAIN DAILY CONTACT WITH THE ONLY TWO CONSULATES IN NOUADHIBOU, REPORT THAT SOUTHERN SAHARA HAS REMAINED QUIET FOR PASUT 72 HOURS WITH MAURITANIAN FORCES MEETING LITTLE IF ANY RESISTANCE. THESE SAME SOURCES REPORT, AND HIGH-LEVEL MAURITANIAN MILITARY OFFICER CONFIRMS, THAT NOUADHIBOU (AND THE AIRPORT), IS COMPLETELY QUIET. FRENCH AND SPANISH REPORTS SUGGEST MAURITANIANS HAVE ESTABLISHED HOLDING PATTERN TO SOLIDIFY THEIR TERRITORIAL GAINS RATHER THAN EMARKING ON FURTHER ADVANCES. MAURITANIAN MILITARY COMMANDEERED THREE AIR MAURITANIE AIRCRAFT ON DECEMBER 29 FOR SUPPORT FLIGHTS TO TROOPS IN NOUADHIBOU AND ZOUERAT.

3. IT IS BECOMING GENERALLY KNOWN AND ACCEPTED IN NOUAKCHOTT THAT MOROCCAN FORCES ARE ASSISTING MAURITANIAN FORCES IN THE NORTH, AND THAT BOTH ARMIES ARE NOW RECEIVING MILITARY EQUIPMENT FROM THE FRENCH. ADDITIONAL FRENCH ASSISTANCE REPORTEDLY OCCURRED WHEN FRENCH MILITARY DOCTORS ATTACHED TO THE HOSPITAL IN NOUAKCHOTT WERE DISPATCHED TO NOAUDHIBOU TO CARE FOR THE CASUALTIES OF LA GUERA ND TICHLA.

4. MAURITANIANS AT THIS POINT WOULD CLEARLY LIKE TO CONSIDER THE WAR IN THE NORTH OVER. SIGNS OF ECONOMIC REPRISALS FROM ALGERIA, HOWEVER, CONTINUE TO SURFACE. LATEST DEVELOPMENT IS THE ABSENCE OF BOTTLED GAS IN NOUAKCHOTT, A COMMODITY IMPORTED PRIMARILY FROM ALGERIA. NEVERTHELESS, MAURITANIAN OFFICIALS AND PARTY PRESS CONTINUE TO REFRAIN FROM ATTACKING ALGERIA.HANDYSIDE

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